

For Immediate Release: July 22, 2011

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Fire Restrictions in Western Nevada Start July 23

Seasonal drying conditions, increasing daytime temperatures and a number of human-caused fires have prompted the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Carson City District Office and the Nevada Division of Forestry's Sierra Forest Fire Protection District to announce the **implementation of fire restrictions on Saturday, July 23, 2011**, at 12:01 a.m., and lasting until further notice.

Vegetation in western Nevada and eastern California has dried out significantly since receiving slightly above normal moisture this past winter and spring. A large crop of grass and brush is evident at lower elevations and trees and other forest vegetation at higher elevations are quickly drying out. The public is encouraged to safely enjoy the public lands, bearing in mind that human-caused fires annually threaten human life, private property and public land resources every summer.

Off-highway motor vehicle enthusiasts are advised that hot exhaust systems can ignite dry grasses. The potential for another devastating fire during the summer is very real. Report fires to the Sierra Front Interagency Dispatch Center, Minden, Nevada, (775) 883-5995, or dial 911.

Fire Restrictions Prohibit:

1. Building, maintaining, attending or using a fire (using wood, charcoal or any other material), campfire, or stove fire except a portable stove using gas or pressurized liquid fuel, outside of a developed fee campground or picnic area (except by permit).
2. Smoking, except within an enclosed vehicle or at a developed campground or picnic area.
3. Welding, or operating an acetylene torch with open flames, except by permit.
4. Using or causing to be used, any explosive, except by permit.
5. Possession or use of fireworks (always prohibited), or any other incendiary device.
6. Use of tracer rounds, steel-core ammunition or exploding targets while recreational shooting.
7. Open burning (e.g. weeds, brush and yard debris).

In addition, the Nevada Division of Forestry restrictions within the Sierra Fire Protection District prohibit operating vehicles off of existing hard surface gravel roads or dirt roads in wildland areas, and operating vehicles or equipment traveling on or using wildland areas without at least an axe, shovel and one gallon of water. The BLM and the Forest Service recommend avoiding cross-country travel whenever possible to prevent grass from igniting from hot exhaust systems. All agencies recommend that individuals carry cell phones while in the wildlands or national forests to report wild fires.

Affected Areas:

BLM – All public land areas, roads and trails located within and administered by the BLM-Nevada Carson City District Office, with the exception of Bureau of Land Management lands west of Highway 395 outside of developed recreation sites with the exception of Sand Mountain Recreation Area, and the portion of the Walker Lake Recreation Area within 100 yards of Walker Lake, or between Walker Lake and U.S. Highway 95 where camp fires are permitted.

FOREST SERVICE – No restrictions at this time.

NDF – All areas, roads and trails within the boundaries of the Sierra Forest Fire Protection District in Carson City and Storey County. This order also applies to the following state parks: Washoe Lake, the Carson River Ranches portion of Fort Churchill, Berlin-Ichthyosaur and Dayton in western Nevada.

Citizens are reminded that the charcoal grills cannot be used during fire restrictions. Charcoal burns longer and hotter than wood and may appear to be cold; however, embers can linger for hours. Winds can spread the embers from charcoal and campfires into vegetation, igniting a wildfire. *Propane or white gas stoves, however, are acceptable for use during fire restrictions.*

As fire season continues the BLM and NDF will be aggressively citing those who do not comply with the posted restrictions and those who use or possess fireworks. Violation of these prohibitions is subject to punishment by a fine of not more than \$10,000 or imprisonment for not more than six months or both, as Class B misdemeanors under federal law (agency statutes vary). Persons may also be responsible for resource damage, suppression costs and any injuries that occur if they are found liable for causing a wildfire.

For more information or clarification on the restrictions, please contact the BLM-Carson City District Office at 775-885-6000, the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest at 775-331-6444, or the Nevada Division of Forestry at 775-849-2500.

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